

## Tip For A Waitress At Walgreen's

Once? You were love -- come on a thin, rickety bicycle  
Pumped up with sixteen years of promise,

Overinflated

From your first uncensored summer

With its weekly allowance

For deviation.

Prior to that you were born unannounced,

Moving in on the 20th century

As a hyphenated serial number,

Gasping for oxygen

On an impersonal assemblyline

In Fresno, Calif.

Where a new generation awaited distribution

To a glutton market.

Candidly put,

You were merely another consumer

Ordained to buy more than you could pay for;

Pay more for less

And earn less than you'd be paid while

Possessing more and owning less

Than anyone, any time, anywhere.

At fourteen, around eleven o'clock

You were jumped by a son of a lettuce crop speculator;

Later,

You walked after running men, you

Stopped when they started back.

Eventually, you began your great, aimless trek toward

Hollywood, falling into step with thousands

Of pairs of legs

More or less more gifted than average. Nothing

Very much happened after that except a man who said,

"There's always room at the bottom for a girl

Who can say No

And never mean it."

And you are at one with yourself now;

One abortion, one marriage, one child, one divorce

And one purpose in life still undefined.

--Curtis Zahn